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THE WARREN COMMISSION PHASE
INVESTIGATION OF CUBAN LEADS
CIA ATTEMPTS AGAINST CASTRO

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interview With: Raymond Rocca
Interviewers: Dan Dwyer and Ed Greissing
DATE: 3/15/76
Place: Arlington, VA

4/5/77

EC

Ed Greissing and Dan Dwyer of the SSC staff interviewed Raymond Rocca, retired Chief, Counterintelligence/Research and Analysis, CIA, at his home in Arlington, Virginia on March 15, 1976. The purpose of the interview was to clarify the role of the CIA in the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination.

(1) The GPFLOOR Phase. The GPFLOOR phase of the CIA's investigation of the assassination covered the period of November 23, 1963 until January 23, 1964. Rocca explained that Richard Helms, DDP, delegated Jack Whitten, desk chief of the Western Hemisphere division, to direct and control the CIA's responses to information that was being reported from CIA stations around the globe. Most of the information the CIA received came from Mexico City where Oswald had contacted the Soviet and Cuban diplomatic establishments in late September and early October. Rocca noted that Thomas Karamessines, Assistant DDP, was probably involved in Helms' decision to have Jack Whitten direct the GPFLOOR investigation.

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(2) Warren Commission Phase. Rocca places the beginning of the Warren Commission phase around January 23, 1964, when J. Lee Rankin contacted Helms and asked for CIA assistance for the Commission. Helms delegated Rocca to be the "point of contact" of the CIA with the Warren Commission. Rocca's own Counterintelligence staff involved in research matters for the Commission included Tom Dooley, Paul Hartman and Thomas Hall. Other CIA personnel involved with the Commission were ~~Jack Whitten~~, Murphy (1)(A) (Chief of SB), J.C. King, Wigren (Chief SB Research), and Bagley (Deputy Chief SB). Rocca noted that as liaison became more informal, staff members of the Commission had direct contact with ~~Whitten~~, Murphy, Wirgren and Bagley. Helms maintained (1)(A) direct contact with Rankin.

Rocca emphasized that the Warren Commission phase was not interpreted by CIA as an investigation. Rocca said that when the Warren Commission "task force" was established, all cables and materials generated in the GPFLOR period from ~~Whitten's~~ (1)(A) desk were made available to the task force. Rocca added, however, that the task force made no appraisal of the GPFLOR phase. When questioned if the Warren Commission "task force" reviewed Mexico City traffic to check name traces, for example, Rocca replied the material was left alone except for the allegations such as the Alvarado matter which concerned the Commission. ~~Whitten~~ (1)(A)

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handled requests from the Commission that dealt with the Mexico City allegations.

(3) Investigation of Cuban Leads. Rocca commented that the Cuban resident tour (Cuban diplomatic and intelligence personnel) in Mexico City should have been more carefully examined. Rocca opined that the Commission staffers who visited Mexico City made a perfectly sound request to interview Silva Durran themselves. Rocca stated he could never understand why the request wasn't granted. Rocca noted that the personnel at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City of greatest interest were Louisa Calderon and (fnu) Rodriguez, who were both DGI. Rodriguez was the Deputy Chief of the resident tour in 1963. Rocca noted that Rodriguez ran two known assassination operations in Nicaragua.

Rocca also noted that Rodriguez ran V.T. Lee into Cuba in December 1962-January 1963. Rocca feels this information needs a full address in light of Oswald's FPCC connection.

Rocca stated that he was unaware of any requests from the Warren Commission that dealt with WAVE operations or Cuban groups. Rocca noted that immediately following the assassination, Paul Hartman was instructed to collect all information from the CIA which was contained in its files on Oswald. Rocca suggested that the SSC contact Hartman to ask him if he levied any request on or conducted a search of WAVE files. Rocca added, however,

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that WAVE support of Cuban groups was characterized as "political action", and as such included operations that the CIA could not tightly control. As a result, files of Cuban group leaders would not be CIA property and the WAVE station only received that information that filtered from Cuban group leaders for one reason or another.

Rocca strongly urged the Committee to persist in gaining access to WAVE files. Rocca concluded that Cuban leads should have been pursued and added that information he and his assistant ~~Don Pratt~~ assimilated during the Garrison investigation, coupled (1)(P) with WAVE information, would be the logical route of documentary investigation. Rocca pointed to information he found during the Garrison investigation as "relevant". Rocca cited a Cuban agent who had penetrated a training camp near New Orleans and who was forwarding mail to a drop in Mexico. Rocca noted that this penetration coincided with Oswald's effort to infiltrate Bringuier's group. Rocca tentatively interpreted these two events as "coincidentally relevant" to the possibility that Oswald could have been a witting Cuban agent.

(4) CIA Attempts Against Castro. Rocca was unaware of assassination plots against Castro. Rocca hypothesized that Dulles might have briefed Warren in some way about covert action against

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Cuba. Rocca also suggested that J.C. King might have known of some sensitive operations in general but that he would have been left out on specifics. Rocca added that ~~Whitten~~ "might have known about sensitive operations through osmosis" because ~~Whitten~~ as desk Chief, Western Hemisphere, would send out traffic to stations including traffic dealing with operations. Rocca noted that the DDP or Director could have by-passed ~~Whitten~~ by authoring and cabling a message themselves.

(1) (4)

(1) (4)

(1) (A)

With regard to Western Hemisphere cable traffic and assassination plots, Rocca noted that in April 1975 there was an individual (name unknown) from Western Hemisphere appointed by Dave Phillips to work with the Inspector General. This individual found the memo that discussed Desmond Fitzgerald's having used Robert Kennedy's name in meeting with AMLASH, in the WH files.

(5) Miscellaneous. Rocca saw nothing strange in the FBI report on Oswald's FPCC activities being routed to SAS. He stated that SAS would have received all reports of relevance to Cuba.

Rocca could offer no explanation as to why the WAVE cable discussing anti-Castro groups' public statement on the assassination was filed in the "sensitive Ops-Kennedy file" and later placed in the Oswald 201 file.

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Rocca commented that the FBI and CIA differed significantly on the treatment ^{that} of the Warren Report gave the issue of foreign conspiracy. CIA advised the issue should be left more open than it was.

(6) Summary. Rocca believes that the DGI in Mexico City should have been more carefully investigated by the Warren Commission ^{CA} "task force" and in the GPFLOR phase. Rocca was unaware of any requests on Cuban groups or CIA Cuban operations that was levied on CIA by the Warren Commission or on the WAVE operation by another CIA component. Rocca expressed the opinion that the SSC persist in gaining access to relevant WAVE files. Rocca believes that some of the information he compiled during the Garrison trial, coupled with relevant WAVE information and review of information ⁱⁿ DGI'S Mexico City activities in 1963, would be a logical resource for appraising unresolved questions about possible Cuban involvement in Kennedy's assassination.

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